



# Interim Forest Management Plan

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## Property Identifiers

Property Name and Designation: **North Branch Trempealeau River Fishery Area**

County: **Jackson**

Property Acreage: **177 Acres**

Forestry Property Code(s): **2704**

Master Plan Date: Concept Element Document – **1983**.

Property Manager: Dan Hatleli

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## Part 1: Property Assessment (1-2 pages maximum)

The following items should be considered during the property assessment. Not all sections may be relevant for all properties.

### General Property Description

#### LANDSCAPE AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

**Hydrology:** North Branch Trempealeau River Fishery Area lies within the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape. Dendritic drainage patterns are well-developed in this mostly unglaciated Ecological Landscape. Natural lakes are restricted to the floodplains of large rivers. Large warm water rivers are especially important here, and include the Wisconsin, Chippewa, and Black. The Mississippi River forms the Ecological Landscapes' western boundary. Numerous spring-fed (coldwater) headwater streams occur here. Cool water streams are also common.

**Current Land Cover:** The Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape is a mosaic of forest, cropland and grassland with wetlands mostly in the river valleys. Primary forest cover is oak and hickory. Maple and basswood forests, dominated by sugar maple, basswood and red maple, are common in areas that were not burned frequently. Bottomland hardwoods dominated by silver maple, swamp white oak, river birch, ashes, elms and cottonwood are common within the floodplains of the larger rivers. Relict "northern" mesic conifer forests composed of hemlock, white pine and associated hardwoods such as yellow birch are rare but do occur in areas with cool, moist microclimates. Dry rocky bluffs may support xeric stands of native white pine, sometimes mixed with red or even jack pine. Prairies are now restricted to steep south or west facing bluffs, unplowed outwash terraces along the large rivers, and a few other sites. They occupy far less than 1% of the current landscape. Mesic tallgrass prairies are now virtually nonexistent except as very small remnants along rights-of-way or in cemeteries.

- History of land use and past management

The North Branch Trempealeau Fishery Area (NBTRFA) is a state owned property with the primary objectives of providing fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities, and protecting water quality. The North Branch originates in northwestern Jackson County and runs south to its confluence with the South Branch. This Fishery Area lies within the Western Coulee and Ridges



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Ecological Landscape and Wisconsin's Driftless Area. All 11.35 miles of the North Branch is Class I trout stream and considered an "Area of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI).

In the late 1950's, the North Branch of the Trempealeau River was initiated as one of the first wildlife areas in west central Wisconsin. Acquisition of the stream frontage and wildlife habitat was proposed by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission. The proposal was endorsed by resolutions from the Jackson County Board of Supervisors and the Boards of Supervisors from the townships of Garden Valley and Hixton in 1958. In 1960, the Conservation Commission received approval of federal aids to acquire 710.65 acres within the boundary. In 1969, the Department of Natural Resources revised the original boundary and authorized an acreage goal of 268.85 acres.

A total of 254.53 acres have been acquired within the approved acquisition boundary. Of this total, 143.75 are in fee ownership and 110.8 acres in permanent easement. The current ownership is essentially a narrow strip of land bordering the stream as it runs through adjacent private lands.

Several management practices have been completed on the acquired lands. Approximately 1.4 miles of instream habitat in the North Branch were improved using various techniques such as plunge pools, overhead covers, bank stabilization, riffles, and current deflectors. An additional 0.7 miles of stream bank was brushed and 7.5 miles fenced to exclude livestock from stream banks. Three parking lots and 14 cattle watering and/or stream crossings were built. All 11.9 miles of ownership and easement have been posted with appropriate signage. Two large, wooden Fishing Area signs were installed. Also, 5,200 red pine were planted along with 4,000 wildlife shrubs.

Electrofishing surveys of the fish populations in the North Branch were conducted in various years from 1962 to present. Since 2007, 2 - 3 trend sites (surveyed annually) were established in the North Branch. The stream contains fishable populations and natural reproduction of both brook and brown trout.

Beaver activity is common throughout the Fishery Area. Periodic removal of beaver dams and trapping are necessary to prevent damage.

## PROPERTY CONTEXT/LANDSCAPE

Contextually, the North Branch of the Trempealeau River Fishery Area is situated in an area that is highly dissected and fragmented with agricultural fields and other open areas. Subsequently, opportunities for large block old forest development for area sensitive forest interior birds is limited. However, this more fragmented setting offers great opportunities for "edge" species and early successional game and "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" as identified within the state's Wildlife Action Plan. See below for species/opportunities.

## WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN/SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

Although the property is not specifically listed in the Wildlife Action Plan's Implementation document for the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape (WCREL), one priority natural community type is listed in the document that the property contains; Coldwater stream (listed as a Driftless Area Feature of Continental Significance).

Species of Greatest Conservation Need associated with Coldwater streams, Springs and Spring runs, early successional forest, pockets of old forest, as well as the shrublands, and wetlands of the property include; Bells Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Brown Thrasher,



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Field Sparrow, Northern Bobwhite quail, American Woodcock, Red-headed Woodpecker, Whip-poor-will, Willow Flycatcher, Wood turtle, Pickerel Frog, Four-toed Salamander, Big Brown bat, Eastern red bat, Prairie vole, and Water shrew.

## **CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AREA**

The property does not fall within a Conservation Opportunity Area as Identified within the 2005 WAP Implementation document.

## **NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY (NHI)/RARE SPECIES**

One state endangered fish and one state threatened reptile are known from the general vicinity of the property.

## **HIGHVALUE CONSERVATION FORESTS (HVCF) OR OTHER RESOURCES/NATURAL COMMUNITY TYPES LIMITED IN THE LANDSCAPE**

None known at the time of this writing.

## **BIOTIC INVENTORY STATUS**

NR 44 compliant Biotic Inventory is complete:

[http://intranet.dnr.state.wi.us/int/land/er/nhi/reports/DASStreamsREA\\_int.pdf](http://intranet.dnr.state.wi.us/int/land/er/nhi/reports/DASStreamsREA_int.pdf)

However, because of the large number of properties to conduct inventory work for in preparation of the Driftless Streams Master Planning process, and the apparent low diversity of this property based on aerial photos and staff discussion, this property was NOT examined during this inventory effort. Because of this, there may be un-mapped or unknown rare or uncommon ecological features.

## **CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES (INCLUDING TRIBAL SITES)**

The Fishery Area has Archeological sites located within its boundaries. Contact with the State Historical Society is required prior to any activities near known sites.

## **RECREATIONAL USE**

Fishing, hunting, and trapping are the primary recreational uses of the property. Access is provided by numerous public road crossings and three parking areas.

The North Branch contains 10.93 miles of Class I and 4.82 miles of Class II trout water. The South Fork contains 11.35 miles of Class I trout water. The stream contains brook and brown trout. Brook is the dominant species. Hunting opportunities exist for whitetail deer, wild turkey, grouse, woodcock, squirrels, and black bear. Trapping opportunities exist for beaver and muskrats.

Other recreational uses:



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- Hiking
- Wildlife Viewing
- Bird Watching
- Biking
- Berry Picking

## INVASIVE SPECIES

The North Branch of the Trempealeau River Fishery Area has one report of honeysuckle in Compartment 1 Stand 2. Inventory on this stand was last taken in 2008 and all stands have not been updated in WisFIRS since 2008.

All invasive species found on this property should be properly treated in a way that reduces impact on the property. Invasive species BMP's will be followed during timber sales and management practices will take into account the effects of these invasive species. Inventory will be updated as well to improve records of invasive species.

## SOILS

NBTRFA is located in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin. Bedrock geology of the area consists of Upper Cambrian or St. Croix sandstone. Predominant soil types located within the boundary are deep peat, Boone fine sandy loam, Boone fine sand, and Genesee silt loam. The Boone fine sandy loam is characterized as being most suited for general farming and is well drained. This soil type generally borders the property with very little included within the boundaries. The remaining soils are generally poorly drained and/or subject to flooding and are generally used for pasture or wild land.

## Current Forest Types, Size Classes, and Successional Stages

The North Branch of the Trempealeau River Fishery Area property consists of 177 acres. 53 acres (30%) of this property are forested, while 124 acres are non-forested. The forested acreage is made up of 2 acres of aspen, 10 acres of oak, 24 acres of red pine and 17 acres of swamp hardwood stands. The aspen is 60 years old and in the 5-11" dbh size class. The oak is 89 years old and in the 5-11" dbh size class. The red pine stands are 30-40 years old and in the 5-9" dbh size class. Finally the swamp hardwoods are 74 years old, consist of silver maple, ash, and box elder, and are in the 11-15" dbh size class. Non-forested acres on the property consist of 21 acres of herbaceous vegetation, 101 acres of lowland brush, and a 2 acre right-of-way.

## Part 2: IFMP Components (1-2 pages maximum)

### Forest Management Objectives:

These properties are managed primarily to restore habitat conditions within the stream corridor, protect water quality, and to provide quality wildlife habitat. Forest management objectives include maintaining existing forest types and developing a diversity of age classes including both young and old forest areas for both game and non-game species dependent on these types. This will largely be accomplished through sustainable silvicultural systems that will increase the diversity and structural complexity of wildlife habitat while at the same time avoiding disturbance to riparian areas along the stream corridor.



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**Property Prescriptions** (Identify specific and pertinent prescriptions by area or forest type, including passive management areas, extended rotation, and other information that will help achieve the objectives):

**ALL STANDS:**

- Follow proper BMP's to protect streams on the property.
- Identify invasive species and use proper BMP practices and treatment options to eradicate or minimize impact.
- Identify and protect rare and endangered species and provide habitat for these species.
- Use thoughtful planning with forest management practices to enhance recreation opportunities on the properties.
- Retain reserve/legacy/green tree retention trees as groups or individuals throughout the property within harvested stands

**North Branch Trempealeau River:**

2016: Comp. 1 Stands 2,3,7 – 10 acres of oak seed-tree harvest and 24 acres of red pine thinning

2030: Comp. 1 Stand 6 – 17 acres of swamp hardwood single tree selection harvest.

Approvals:

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Regional Ecologist Date

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Forester Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area/Team Supervisor Date



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2016 Sale – 5 acres Pine Thinning  
Sale merged with Tank Creek Pine Thinning





